

Development and Pilot Evaluation of an Evidence-Based Digital Learning Module on Alcohol and Domestic Violence for Public Education and Integration into a Domestic Violence Intervention Programme

Summary

Domestic violence is a major public-health and social problem. Alcohol does not cause domestic violence and must never be used to excuse it; however, harmful alcohol use is a well-established, modifiable risk factor that can increase the likelihood, frequency and severity of aggression by impairing attention, judgement, problem-solving, frustration tolerance and behavioural inhibition. Swiss-specific data indicate that alcohol is present in a substantial proportion of police-recorded domestic-violence incidents, while professionals report an even larger overlap between problematic drinking and violence in intimate relationships.

Despite this overlap, alcohol and domestic violence are often addressed in separate service systems. People who use violence may underestimate the role of alcohol, externalise responsibility to intoxication, or lack concrete strategies for recognising highrisk drinking situations and interrupting escalation. Conversely, people seeking information about alcohol may not encounter clear, non-stigmatising guidance on coercive control, accountability, safety planning and specialised support. Switzerland currently lacks a freely accessible, evidence-based digital learning resource that integrates these perspectives and which can also be used within structured perpetrator intervention.

This 12-month project will develop and pilot an interactive online learning module on alcohol and domestic violence. The module will be designed for two complementary uses: (a) as a standalone digital public-education resource for adults, relatives and professionals, and (b) as a learning resource that can be integrated into facilitated group programmes or individual counselling in a blended-learning format. Within this project, the latter application will be piloted over one or two evenings within ongoing groups of the Learning Programme against Domestic Violence run by the Bern Intervention Centre against Domestic Violence (Berner Interventionsstelle gegen häusliche Gewalt, BIG). The development of both the online learning module and the associated blended-learning concept will follow a participatory and interdisciplinary approach, involving BIG, Berner Gesundheit and Blaues Kreuz Bern–Solothurn–Freiburg, together with IML experts in digital learning and evaluation.

The project comprises four work packages: (1) evidence synthesis and needs analysis; (2) didactic design and co-development of the online learning module; (3) pilot implementation and usability testing; and (4) finalisation, implementation within BIG, pilot evaluation and broader dissemination. As the project will develop and test an initial application and educational concept, the evaluation will be exploratory and formative in nature. Its purpose will be to identify strengths, limitations and areas for improvement and to inform the iterative refinement of both the digital resource and the blended-learning approach. The pilot will assess feasibility, acceptability, usability, knowledge acquisition, perceived relevance, self-reflection, perceived self-efficacy (e.g., the intended use of risk-reduction strategies). Qualitative feedback from participants and facilitators will guide further refinement. The resulting modular online learning resource will be designed to be sustainable, scalable and transferable to other counselling, prevention and domestic-violence intervention settings. It will directly support Swiss priorities relating to alcohol-related harm, the prevention of domestic violence, cross-sector collaboration and accessible digital health education.